

Form Number 500

Agency Adjustment Summary

State of Nebraska - Administrative Services - Budget Division

	PAGE NUMBER 1
	CODE & DESCRIPTION
AGENCY	Foster Care Review Board

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	ADJUSTMENTS	
	2005-2006	2006-2007
Permanent F.T.E. Positions		10.0
511100 Permanent Salaries - Wages		294,443
511200 Temporary Salaries - Wages		
511600 Per Diem Payments		
511900 Supplemental (One-time payments)		
All Other Salaries		
Sub-Total Salaries	0	294,443
515100 Retirement Plans Expense		22,048
515200 OASDI Expense		22,525
515400 Life and Accident Insurance Expense		167
515500 Health Insurance Expense	10,080	157,181
All Other Personal Services		
Sub-Total Benefits	10,080	201,921
510000 Personal Services	10,080	496,364
520000 Operating Expenses		16,250
570000 Travel Expenses		15,000
580000 Capital Outlay		
590000 Government Aid		
Total Expense	10,080	527,614
Means of Financing		
General Fund	6,930	362,736
Cash Fund		
Federal Fund	3,150	164,878
Revolving Fund		
Total Funding	10,080	527,614

Note: In the blank lines under Operating Expenses, itemize individual line items that comprise a significant portion of the Total Operating Expenses.

Program Adjustment Narrative

State of Nebraska – Administrative Services – Budget Division

		Page Number 2
	CODE	DESCRIPTION
AGENCY	070	Foster Care Review Board
PROGRAM	116	
REQUEST	1	

Provide the following information: A) Description of Request; B) Rationale for Request; C) Impact of Request; and, D) Statutory Change if Required.

According to State Personnel, Health Insurance Premiums will increase 22.1% as of January 1, 2006. The Review Board is requesting the 10% above the 12% already allocated to agencies for a Health Insurance increase for 2006. Based on current utilization of Health Insurance by the staff of the Review Board, this constitutes \$10,080 for the remainder of FY 06 and \$20,160 for FY 07.

The Review Board cannot meet this increase without additional funding. Without additional funding, cuts to staff persons may be necessary. There is no statutory change required.

Program Adjustment Request

State of Nebraska - Administrative Services - Budget Division

PAGE NUMBER 3

CODE & DESCRIPTION

AGENCY 070 Foster Care Review Board

PROGRAM 116

REQUEST #1 Health Ins. Increase Request

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	APPROPRIATIONS		ADJUSTMENTS	
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007
Permanent F.T.E. Positions	28.5	28.5		
511100 Permanent Salaries - Wages	1,014,015	1,048,482		
511200 Temporary Salaries - Wages	5,000	5,000		
511600 Per Diem Payments				
511900 Supplemental (One-time payments)				
All Other Salaries				
Sub-Total Salaries	1,019,015	1,053,482	0	0
515100 Retirement Plans Expense	74,000	76,500		
515200 OASDI Expense	75,000	78,688		
515400 Life and Accident Insurance Expense	468	640		
515500 Health Insurance Expense	192,000	201,600	10,080	20,160
All Other Personal Services	14,480	16,480		
Sub-Total Benefits	355,948	373,908	10,080	20,160
510000 Personal Services	1,374,963	1,427,390	10,080	20,160
520000 Operating Expenses	257,432	264,091		
Postage				
Printing				
Communications				
570000 Travel Expenses	49,950	55,750		
580000 Capital Outlay	13,770	23,271		
590000 Government Aid				
Total Expense	1,696,115	1,770,502	10,080	20,160
Means of Financing				
General Fund	1,158,154.00	1,209,253.00	6,930	13,860
Cash Fund	6,000.00	6,000.00		0
Federal Fund	531,961.00	555,249.00	3,150	6,300
Revolving Fund				
Total Funding	1,696,115	1,770,502	10,080	20,160

Note: In the blank lines under Operating Expenses, itemize individual line items that comprise a significant portion of the Total Operating Expenses.

Program Adjustment Narrative

State of Nebraska – Administrative Services – Budget Division

	CODE	DESCRIPTION
AGENCY	070	Foster Care Review Board
PROGRAM	116	
REQUEST	2	Review Specialist

Provide the following information: A) Description of Request; B) Rationale for Request; C) Impact of Request; and, D) Statutory Change if Required.

Request Priority 2

A. Five Review Specialists

On July 18, 2005, the State Foster Care Review Board voted to submit a deficit request for five additional Review Specialists to extend the protection of citizen review and promote children's safety and best interests to all children in out-of-home care, to restore reviewer positions lost during budget cuts, and to address the need to review additional children due to an increase on children in out of home care.

The recent staff reductions due to budget cuts allow the Review Board to only review only two-thirds of the children in care 6 months or more. IVE eligible children and children aged birth to age five are prioritized. This means there are on average one third of children in out-of-home care that will not benefit from the protection of citizen review.

Current staffing levels are too low to ensure that both IVE and non-IVE children are reviewed.

As of October 27, 2005, there were 4,918 HHS wards that had been in care 6 months or more.

- Of the 4,918 wards in care 6 months or more, 2,009 were IV-E eligible. Of those children:
 - 1,789 had timely reviews
 - 135 had been reviewed, but not in the last 6 months and
 - 85 had not been reviewed during this removal.
- Of the 4,918 wards in care 6 months or more, 2,909 were non-IV-E eligible. Of those children:
 - 588 had timely reviews
 - 779 had been reviewed, but not in the last 6 months and
 - 1,542 had not been reviewed during this removal.

The protection of citizen review includes:

- Reviewing each child's plan to determine if it is in the child's best interest,
- Sharing case concerns with legal parties prior to court so concerns can be addressed,
- Oversight to assure safety and appropriateness of child's placement through citizen review, tours of child caring facilities, and/or Project Permanency visits,
- Advocating to address concerns that affect children's best interests,
- Tracking all children in out-of-home care in an accurate and timely fashion, and
- Analyzing and evaluating the Board's data and recommending policy and practice changes to the Governor, Legislature, the Judiciary, public and private child caring agencies, the press, and the public, so a child's best interest and safety can be assured.

Program Adjustment Narrative

State of Nebraska – Administrative Services – Budget Division

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PROGRAM	116	
REQUEST	2	Review Specialist

Provide the following information: A) Description of Request; B) Rationale for Request; C) Impact of Request; and, D) Statutory Change if Required.

The five additional Review Specialists would staff 15 additional local boards which would be located across the state and would to help review 1,000 additional children on an annual basis.

\$264,145 - 5 Review Specialists

Breakdown of request for one Review Specialist

PSL	\$31,578.82 (annual salary)
Benefits	\$18,500.20 (SSI, retirement, health, life)
Operations	\$2,750.00 (office supplies, mileage, copies, etc.)
Total	\$52,829 (for one Review Specialist)

B. Rationale for request

Five additional Review Specialists will:

- Review and advocate for the best interests of 1,000 additional children in out-of-home care. Five additional staff persons would allow the Review Board to fulfill its legislative mandate, which is to review all children in out-of-home care.
- Train 100+ additional community members to serve on 15 additional community-based local review boards across the state.
- Involve additional community members (such as parents, foster parents, school personnel, counselors, day care providers, extended family members, law enforcement, legal parties) in children's reviews and/or educational programs sponsored and/or co-sponsored by the Review Board.
- Contact additional foster parents/placements, guardian ad litem and/or case managers to clarify conflicting or omitted file information and to gain updates on the case.
- Communicate additional recommendations and findings after each review to Judges and the legal parties (including the county attorney, HHS staff, child's attorney, parole/probation officers, and/or the judge),
- Promote the best interests of 1,000 additional children in out-of-home care which includes:
 - Working to monitor, assure safety and appropriateness, and address concerns regarding children's placements through citizen review, tours of child caring facilities, and/or Project Permanency visits.
 - Pro-actively work with the Courts to address the Board's case concerns.
 - Working to assure a children's safety, that children's basic needs are met, and that children are moving towards permanency by:
 - Following up on cases where children appear to be at risk by either their foster care placement of biological parent,
 - Contacting HHS casemanagers, supervisors, legal staff, adoption workers, or administration as well as guardians ad litem, investigators, or prosecutors on behalf of an individual child's case,

Program Adjustment Narrative

State of Nebraska – Administrative Services – Budget Division

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PROGRAM	116	
REQUEST	2	Review Specialist

Provide the following information: A) Description of Request; B) Rationale for Request; C) Impact of Request; and, D) Statutory Change if Required.

- Arranging case status meetings between the legal parties to the case on behalf of a child or children to address the concerns in a case,
- Forwarding cases to the Attorney General's office for prosecution of crimes against children,
- Bringing cases to LB 1184 meetings to facilitate meeting the child's needs through discussion of the case with the legal parties,
- Taking legal standing in order to advocate the child's best interests in court. Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-1313 allows the Board to request and participate in review hearings at the dispositional level.

C. Impact of request

a. Quantitative and qualitative impacts of the adjustment

The Review Board's current staffing level only allows the Board to review two thirds of the children in out-of-home care for 6 months or more. Five additional review specialists will allow the Board the capacity to work to review all children in out-of-home care.

b. What services would be continued?

The Review Board would continue to work to meet our State and Federal mandates to review children and youth and provide multi-disciplinary, community-based, timely reviews of children who have been in out-of-home care for 6 months or longer as mandated by federal law.

What client groups would be served?

Children in out-of-home care would be served by providing all state wards in care for six months or longer with the benefit of citizen review as mandated by state and federal law and regulations.

How will agency goals, objectives, outputs, and outcomes be affected?

The following Review Board goals and statutory obligations would be facilitated by this request:

- Review all children and youth in out-of-home care to assure they have permanency plans and timely and appropriate services.
- Improve the foster care experience for children in out-of-home care.
- Communicate information on children in out-of-home care.

What will happen if funding is not provided for this request?

The Legislature passed LB 642 in July 1996, which established the Foster Care Review Board as the agency responsible for the periodic reviews of children in out-of-home care pursuant to the federal Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, Public Law 96-272, citing the quality of the reviews conducted by the Board, the fact that reviews are shared with all legal parties, that reviews are a community-based, multi-disciplinary approach, and that the data collected from these reviews would be valuable to policy makers.

Program Adjustment Narrative

State of Nebraska – Administrative Services – Budget Division

	CODE	DESCRIPTION
AGENCY	070	Foster Care Review Board
PROGRAM	116	
REQUEST	2	Review Specialist

Provide the following information: A) Description of Request; B) Rationale for Request; C) Impact of Request; and, D) Statutory Change if Required.

If funding is not provided for this request, the Review Board could be found to be out of compliance with its state and federal mandate to review all children in out-of-home care. Federal sanctions could occur and Federal funding for these children's care could be lost. In addition, not all children in out-of-home care would receive the benefit and protection of citizen review as intended by the Legislature.

Currently, due to budget cuts, there is no independent oversight on one third of the cases of children in out-of-home care in Nebraska.

Indicate whether funding for this request matches other fund sources and to what extent other fund sources may be lost if the request is not funded.

The Review Board receives Federal funding based on the Board's general appropriation and the number of IV-E eligible children reviewed. Federal funds the Board receives are figured by the following equation:

$1/2 \text{ of the FCRB Appropriation (x) \% of IV-E children reviewed} = \text{Federal funding.}$

The Review Board could potentially see an increase in Federal funds as a result of additional General Appropriations.

D. Statutory change, if required

None needed

Program Adjustment Request

State of Nebraska - Administrative Services - Budget Division

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CODE & DESCRIPTION

AGENCY 070 Foster Care Review Board

PROGRAM 116

REQUEST #2 Review Specialist

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	APPROPRIATIONS		ADJUSTMENTS	
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007
Permanent F.T.E. Positions	28.5	28.5		5.0
511100 Permanent Salaries - Wages	1,014,015	1,048,482		157,894
511200 Temporary Salaries - Wages	5,000	5,000		
511600 Per Diem Payments				
511900 Supplemental (One-time payments)				
All Other Salaries				
Sub-Total Salaries	1,019,015	1,053,482	0	157,894
515100 Retirement Plans Expense	74,000	76,500		11,823
515200 OASDI Expense	75,000	78,688		12,078
515400 Life and Accident Insurance Expense	468	640		84
515500 Health Insurance Expense	192,000	201,600		68,515
All Other Personal Services	14,480	16,480		
Sub-Total Benefits	355,948	373,908	0	92,500
510000 Personal Services	1,374,963	1,427,390		250,394
520000 Operating Expenses	257,432	264,091		
Postage				2,440
Printing				2,440
Communications				2,440
570000 Travel Expenses	49,950	55,750		6,431
580000 Capital Outlay	13,770	23,271		
590000 Government Aid				
Total Expense	1,696,115	1,770,502	0	264,145
Means of Financing				
General Fund	1,158,154.00	1,209,253.00		181,600
Cash Fund	6,000.00	6,000.00		0
Federal Fund	531,961.00	555,249.00		82,545
Revolving Fund				
Total Funding	1,696,115	1,770,502		264,145

Note: In the blank lines under Operating Expenses, itemize individual line items that comprise a significant portion of the Total Operating Expenses.

Program Adjustment Narrative

State of Nebraska – Administrative Services – Budget Division

	CODE	DESCRIPTION
AGENCY	070	Foster Care Review Bd
PROGRAM	116	
REQUEST	3	RS Supervisor

Provide the following information: A) Description of Request; B) Rationale for Request; C) Impact of Request; and, D) Statutory Change if Required.

Request Priority 3

A. One Review Specialist Supervisor

The request for one additional Review Specialist Supervisor is made to supervise the five additional review specialists and 1 placement officer requested to extend the protection of citizen review and promote children's safety and best interests to all children in out-of-home care.

Review Specialist Supervisors are integral to the Review Board's ability to promote children's safety and best interests. Supervisors accomplish this by:

- Supervising of review specialists, whose responsibilities include increased levels of advocacy for children's best interests, completion of the Board's formal recommendations to the court, and facilitation of local board meetings,
- Completing an appropriate and immediate response to a growing number of serious safety concerns for children in foster care,
- Increasing interactions with other legal parties to the children's cases, such as judges, county attorneys, attorneys representing the children or parents, and HHS administration and staff, and
- Representing the Board in court hearings.

Supervisors take a lead role by advocating for children in out-of-home care on at least 400 cases per year per Supervisor.

\$61,594 1 Review Specialist Supervisor

Breakdown of Request

Salary	\$38,323.00 (annual salary)
Benefits	\$19,521.13 (SSI, retirement, health, over-time, etc.)
Office Overhead	\$3,750.00 (office supplies, computer, mileage, copies, etc.)
Total	\$61,594.13

An additional Supervisor will:

- Hire, train and supervise review specialists as well as facilitate productivity and good outcomes for children.
- Review staff's recommendation documents written for the 1,000 additional children reviewed. These documents are legal documents submitted to the court. The Supervisor will also review recommendations and make sure they are in compliance with agency policy and our statute.
- Cover review specialist case loads during illness, vacation, and/or extended leave.
- Arrange tours of child caring facilities and coordinate follow-up.
- Meet with area judges, county attorneys, HHS staff, etc. as needed to address issues on a systematic and case level.
- Assist with board recruitment, training, and updating the board training manual.
- Act as liaison with other agencies at the management level.

Program Adjustment Narrative

State of Nebraska – Administrative Services – Budget Division

	CODE	DESCRIPTION
AGENCY	070	Foster Care Review Bd
PROGRAM	116	
REQUEST	3	RS Supervisor

Provide the following information: A) Description of Request; B) Rationale for Request; C) Impact of Request; and, D) Statutory Change if Required.

- Arrange regular visits to board meetings by state legislators and aid review specialists in developing list of issues needed to address while legislator is present at meeting (general state-wide issues and area specific issues).

C. Impact of request

a. Quantitative and qualitative impacts of the adjustment

The Review Board's current supervisory staffing level would need to be expanded to supervise the five additional review specialists and one placement officer to assure quality, timely, and complete reviews of all children in out-of-home care.

b. What services would be continued?

The Review Board would continue to work to meet our State and Federal mandates to review children and youth and provide multi-disciplinary, community-based, timely reviews children who have been in out-of-home care for 6 months or longer as mandated by federal law.

What client groups would be served?

Children in out-of-home care would be served by providing all wards in care for six months or longer with the benefit of citizen review as mandated by state and federal law and regulations.

How will agency goals, objectives, outputs, and outcomes be affected?

The following Review Board goals and statutory obligations would be facilitated by this request:

- Review all children and youth in out-of-home care to assure they have permanency plans and timely and appropriate services.
- Improve the foster care experience for children in out-of-home care.
- Communicate information on children in out-of-home care.

What will happen if funding is not provided for this request?

- If funding is not provided for this request, the Review Board could be found to be out of compliance with its state and federal mandate to review all children in out-of-home care. Federal sanctions could occur and Federal funding for children's care could be lost.

Indicate whether funding for this request matches other fund sources and to what extent other fund sources may be lost if the request is not funded.

The Review Board receives Federal funding based on the Board's general appropriation and the number of IV-E eligible children reviewed. Federal funds the Board receives are figured by the following equation:

$\frac{1}{2}$ of the FCRB Appropriation (x) % of IV-E children reviewed = Federal funding.

The Review Board could potentially see an increase in Federal funds as a result of additional General Appropriations.

Program Adjustment Request

State of Nebraska - Administrative Services - Budget Division

PAGE NUMBER 11

CODE & DESCRIPTION

AGENCY 070 Foster Care Review Board

PROGRAM 116

REQUEST #3 Review Specialist Supervisor

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	APPROPRIATIONS		ADJUSTMENTS	
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007
Permanent F.T.E. Positions	28.5	28.5		1.0
511100 Permanent Salaries - Wages	1,014,015	1,048,482		38,323
511200 Temporary Salaries - Wages	5,000	5,000		
511600 Per Diem Payments				
511900 Supplemental (One-time payments)				
All Other Salaries				
Sub-Total Salaries	1,019,015	1,053,482	0	38,323
515100 Retirement Plans Expense	74,000	76,500		2,870
515200 OASDI Expense	75,000	78,688		2,932
515400 Life and Accident Insurance Expense	468	640		16
515500 Health Insurance Expense	192,000	201,600		13,703
All Other Personal Services	14,480	16,480		
Sub-Total Benefits	355,948	373,908	0	19,521
510000 Personal Services	1,374,963	1,427,390		57,844
520000 Operating Expenses	257,432	264,091		
Postage				850
Printing				850
Communications				850
570000 Travel Expenses	49,950	55,750		1,200
580000 Capital Outlay	13,770	23,271		
590000 Government Aid				
Total Expense	1,696,115	1,770,502	0	61,594
Means of Financing				
General Fund	1,158,154.00	1,209,253.00		42,346
Cash Fund	6,000.00	6,000.00		0
Federal Fund	531,961.00	555,249.00		19,248
Revolving Fund				
Total Funding	1,696,115	1,770,502		61,594

Note: In the blank lines under Operating Expenses, itemize individual line items that comprise a significant portion of the Total Operating Expenses.

Program Adjustment Narrative

State of Nebraska – Administrative Services – Budget Division

	CODE	DESCRIPTION
AGENCY	070	Foster Care Review Bd
PROGRAM	116	
REQUEST	4	Placement Officer

Provide the following information: A) Description of Request; B) Rationale for Request; C) Impact of Request; and, D) Statutory Change if Required.

Request Priority 4

A. One Placement Officer

The request for one placement officer is made to promote children's safety and best interests. For children, few things matter as much as whether the place they live is a safe, decent environment, filled with adults who genuinely care for them, and whom the children can trust.

On July 24, 2005, the State Board authorized a deficit request of FTEs and funding for one Placement Officer to be filled at the Review Specialist salary level and classification.

\$52,829 - 1 Placement Officer

Breakdown of request for one Placement Officer

PSL	\$31,578.82 (annual salary)
Benefits	\$18,500.20 (SSI, retirement, health, life)
Operations	\$2,750.00 (office supplies, computer, mileage, copies, etc.)
Total	\$52,829.02

B. Rationale for Request

The Review Board is requesting a Placement Officer because, since expanding though LB 642 in 1996, the Board has been able to conduct more reviews and identify more situations where children and youth are placed in dangerous situations and/or where children and youth have been abused while in care.

In 2004, 3,819 children were reviewed. From the children reviewed, local boards found that 259 children's placements appeared unsafe and/or inappropriate. In addition, local boards were unable to determine the appropriateness of 619 children's placements due to the lack of documentation, the lack of a current home study, or for another reason.

The Review Board cannot allocate present staff to address all serious placement concerns and meet its federal and state mandate. This is because of the great deal of time it takes to determine who is in the home, the needs of the children placed at the home, and what kind of care the children are receiving. The time it takes to determine these important factors is compounded by the inaccurate and deficient data on the HHS N-FOCUS system, as well as by increased case manager turnover.

Program Adjustment Narrative

State of Nebraska – Administrative Services – Budget Division

	CODE	DESCRIPTION
AGENCY	070	Foster Care Review Bd
PROGRAM	116	
REQUEST	4	Placement Officer

Provide the following information: A) Description of Request; B) Rationale for Request; C) Impact of Request; and, D) Statutory Change if Required.

The Review Board's Placement Officer would work to address issues identified by local boards, staff, and special requests that affect the safety of children placed in out-of-home care and allow the Review Board an expanded capacity to address the increasing number of identified placement concerns.

A Placement Officer would conduct comprehensive reviews of all children placed at a particular placement, communicate the Board's concerns to HHS, work with HHS until the issues are resolved, and assist the Review Board in verification of data on children in out-of-home care.

C. Impact of request

a. Quantitative and qualitative impacts of the adjustment

A Placement Officer would assist in fulfilling the Review Board's mandate to visit and observe foster care facilities in order to ascertain whether individual physical, psychological, and sociological needs of each foster child are being met [Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-1303(6)] and the Board's ability to find whether a child's current placement is safe and appropriate [Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-1308 (b)] especially in light of the current state of the Child Welfare System.

b. What services would be continued?

The Review Board would continue to work to meet our State and Federal mandates to review children and youth. A Placement Officer would allow the Review Board an expanded capacity to address the increasing number of identified placement concerns. A Placement Officer would also communicate the Board's concerns to HHS and work with HHS until the issues concerning each child's safety in their placement is resolved.

What client groups would be served?

The vulnerable population of children and youth in out-of-home care, HHS, and agency based and private providers of foster care placements.

A Placement Officer's focus on the issue of placements would greatly expand the Review Board's ability to:

- Ensure the safety of a child's placement;
- Oversee placements;
- Ascertain the appropriateness of placements as required by Federal mandates;
- Coordinate the Board's ability to identify placement and address placement concerns brought forward by the local boards, staff, and State Board; and
- Expand the protection of citizen review.

How will agency goals, objectives, outputs, and outcomes be affected?

The following Review Board goals and statutory obligations would be facilitated by this request:

Program Adjustment Narrative

State of Nebraska – Administrative Services – Budget Division

	CODE	DESCRIPTION
AGENCY	070	Foster Care Review Bd
PROGRAM	116	
REQUEST	4	Placement Officer

Provide the following information: A) Description of Request; B) Rationale for Request; C) Impact of Request; and, D) Statutory Change if Required.

- To monitor the placements of children in out-of-home care to ascertain whether individual physical, psychological and sociological needs are being met;
- To improve the foster care experience for children; and
- To find whether a child's current placement is safe and appropriate.

What will happen if funding is not provided for this request?

If funding is not provided for this request:

- The Board would not be able to visit as many facilities, communicate as many concerns regarding safety issues to HHS, or work with HHS to resolve identified safety issues at a child's placement.
- The Board's ability to meet its statutory requirement to visit and observe foster care facilities in order to ascertain whether individual physical, psychological, and sociological needs of each foster child are being met [Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-1303(6)] and the Board's ability to find whether a child's current placement is safe and appropriate [Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-1308 (b)] would be diminished; and
- There would be less coordination of the Review Board's response when a concern regarding a child's safety at a placement is identified.

Indicate whether funding for this request matches other fund sources and to what extent other fund sources may be lost if the request is not funded.

The Review Board receives Federal funding based on the Board's general appropriation and the number of IV-E eligible children reviewed. Federal funds the Board receives are figured by the following equation:

$1/2 \text{ of the FCRB Appropriation (x) \% of IV-E children reviewed} = \text{Federal funding.}$

The Review Board could potentially see an increase in Federal funds as a result of additional General Appropriations.

D. Statutory change, if required

None needed

Program Adjustment Request

State of Nebraska - Administrative Services - Budget Division

PAGE NUMBER 15

CODE & DESCRIPTION

AGENCY 070 Foster Care Review Board

PROGRAM 116

REQUEST #4 Placement Officer

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	APPROPRIATIONS		ADJUSTMENTS	
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007
Permanent F.T.E. Positions	28.5	28.5		1.0
511100 Permanent Salaries - Wages	1,014,015	1,048,482		31,578
511200 Temporary Salaries - Wages	5,000	5,000		
511600 Per Diem Payments				
511900 Supplemental (One-time payments)				
All Other Salaries				
Sub-Total Salaries	1,019,015	1,053,482	0	31,578
515100 Retirement Plans Expense	74,000	76,500		2,365
515200 OASDI Expense	75,000	78,688		2,416
515400 Life and Accident Insurance Expense	468	640		17
515500 Health Insurance Expense	192,000	201,600		13,703
All Other Personal Services	14,480	16,480		
Sub-Total Benefits	355,948	373,908	0	18,501
510000 Personal Services	1,374,963	1,427,390		50,079
520000 Operating Expenses	257,432	264,091		
Postage				650
Printing				650
Communications				650
570000 Travel Expenses	49,950	55,750		800
580000 Capital Outlay	13,770	23,271		
590000 Government Aid				
Total Expense	1,696,115	1,770,502	0	52,829
Means of Financing				
General Fund	1,158,154.00	1,209,253.00		36,320
Cash Fund	6,000.00	6,000.00		0
Federal Fund	531,961.00	555,249.00		16,509
Revolving Fund				
Total Funding	1,696,115	1,770,502		52,829

Note: In the blank lines under Operating Expenses, itemize individual line items that comprise a significant portion of the Total Operating Expenses.

Program Adjustment Narrative

State of Nebraska – Administrative Services – Budget Division

	CODE	DESCRIPTION
AGENCY	070	FCRB
PROGRAM	116	
REQUEST	5	N-FOUCS Request

Provide the following information: A) Description of Request; B) Rationale for Request; C) Impact of Request; and, D) Statutory Change if Required.

Request Priority 5

A. 3 Staff Assistants, Software Licensure, Equipment

In 2003, the Board learned that Federal officials had earlier clarified for Nebraska HHS officials that any state accepting SACWIS federal funding must have only one official record concerning children in out-of-home care and since Nebraska HHS had developed N-FOCUS with these funds, the Board must fully integrate, rather than electronically link, its independent tracking system into N-FOCUS or the State of Nebraska would be penalized and forced to refund \$12.7 million in development fees utilized in the implementation of N-FOUCS plus about \$4 million on-going federal monies.

The process of attempting to ensure that the Board's data would remain accurate, independent, and easily available on the N-FOCUS platform began in 2004. It continues in 2005. Conversion is scheduled for March 2006, with some data being mechanically converted from the old system to the new, and most other data requiring later manual conversion.

The Board's tracking system is used to schedule cases for review and to measure outcomes for children.

Additional Funds are needed to maintain the Board's Data on Children in Out-of-Home care

1. Entry will take longer due to a more complicated N-FOCUS design structure. The Foster Care Review Board currently dedicates 1.75 FTE to Tracking System entry. This is to enter court documents from 93 courts, the review information for 6,000+ reviews a year, and HHS reports. The Courts and HHS report to the Board by law 3 days after a child enters care, leaves care or if the child's placement changes. The Board estimates that it will take at least twice as long to enter and track the same information and as a result is requesting three additional FTEs to continue its statutory mandate to track children in out-of-home care.
2. Queries needed to extract key data needed for daily operations will be much more complicated, and thus likely to be far more expensive. The queries will be done with a program called Crystal Reports and they will include scheduling cases for review and measuring outcomes for children. Although CPU (Cycles per Unit or Billing increments for Processing) time is less expensive in the N-FOUCS/Crystal Report environment, the complexity of the queries are likely to double the time it takes to produce answers to the queries. The Review Board's current Tracking System budget of \$40,000 per year is currently used to maintain the LVM system, house the Board's historical data and support queries. The Board plans to utilize this money to support the just the costs of querying the new N-FOCUS system.
3. The Review Board's portion of N-FOCUS will be housed on the HHS N-FOCUS system and HHS will bear the ongoing costs of maintaining this system.

Program Adjustment Narrative

State of Nebraska – Administrative Services – Budget Division

	CODE	DESCRIPTION
AGENCY	070	FCRB
PROGRAM	116	
REQUEST	5	N-FOUCS Request

Provide the following information: A) Description of Request; B) Rationale for Request; C) Impact of Request; and, D) Statutory Change if Required.

\$128,887 – 3 Staff Assistants, Software, and Hardware

PSL	\$66,648 (\$22,216 for one Staff Assistant)
Benefits	\$51,240 (SSI, retirement, health, life)
Operations	\$11,000 (office supplies, software, hardware, etc.)
Total	128,887

B. Rationale

Background

Nebraska HHS is required to report to the Board when children enter foster care, when they change placement or case managers, and when children leave care. It does so via reports from its N-FOCUS computer system. Information from the reports is subsequently entered on the Board's tracking system after verification (described in more detail below).

The information HHS provides is used to track children and to know when/where to schedule their cases for review. Since HHS converted to N-FOCUS there have been serious problems with the accuracy of data on these reports.

The accuracy problems were significant, and in early 2003, the Board arranged a meeting with the Legislature's Appropriations Committee to explain the issues and the costs involved in verifying whether the data on the reports was accurate or not, and in trying to locate children whose records had not been entered on the N-FOCUS system. At the meeting, HHS middle management presented a letter they had received from federal officials in 2002 stating that, since the Board's system was independent, N-FOCUS was out of compliance with federal regulations, and there could be severe penalties.

The Board immediately contacted federal officials upon learning of the regulation and pending fines. The Board noted in numerous contacts thereafter that state statute requires an independent tracking system and that the Board's system is funded solely by state funds. The Board also noted that shared use of inaccurate data could result in the Board not being able to function, negatively impacting children.

Federal officials stated that the Board must integrate its tracking system into N-FOCUS or the State of Nebraska would be penalized and forced to refund \$12.7 million in development fees plus about \$4 million on-going federal monies.

Paying this penalty was not a fiscal or political option, so the Board entered into intensive discussions with HHS on how the Board's data can be housed on the N-FOCUS system without sacrificing quality, availability, and independence. These discussions continue.

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Remaining Issues

The tentative date for the data merger is March 2006; however, a number of issues remain.

Issue: Information Accuracy

- When the Legislature put the Foster Care Review Board in place in 1982, it mandated in statute that the Board is to maintain an independent tracking system due to the historical problems with HHS lacking accurate data on children in out-of-home care.
 - At that time, HHS did not know how many children were in care or where they were placed, and estimated that 1,800 Nebraska children were in foster care.
 - At the end of the Board's first year of tracking, there were actually 4,071 children documented to be in foster care in Nebraska.
- Without independent oversight, Nebraska may again be in a situation similar to 1982, not knowing who is in care or where they are placed. This has led to tragic consequences in other states such as Florida and Texas.
- From N-FOCUS' inception to the present, the Board has found a continued high rate of error or omissions in key data elements. After numerous discussions and offers to work with HHS on its internal quality assurance over the years since N-FOCUS went online, the Board finds it must continue to verify at least 50% of the 60,000+ reports received from HHS each year due to inaccurate, conflicting, or missing data.
- While the Board controls the quality of its data entry on its current system, in the combined system some key data elements (i.e., date of birth), will be able to be changed by both Board staff and HHS staff from a variety of different programs. The Board will not be able to control for most errors on these key elements made by workers outside its agency. This may affect data quality and the ability of the Board to schedule cases for review.
- Based on the experience since 1997, the Board's ability to continue to provide high-quality data may be at risk in a combined system, and there is no assurance that N-FOCUS data quality will improve.

Issue: Conversion will not include all data

- Data conversion from the current system to the N-FOCUS platform will be problematic. HHS does not intend to convert much of the Board's existing data. Much of the data will need manual conversion, yet HHS has, as of early October 2005, not provided any assistance with this massive undertaking, and the Board has no funds that can be diverted to hiring temporary help.

Issue: Access to Information

- As the state's IV-E review agency, the Board receives some federal funds for reviews. Key data elements on the Board's tracking system are used to assure these reviews are scheduled appropriately. Access to accurate information on these elements is critical to continuing to receive federal funds and to affording children the protections of citizen review.
- The current and immediate past HHS director have been very responsive to the Board's concerns with N-FOCUS data quality issues and the effect on the children; however, this has not always been the case. Future directors, like many in the past, may view the Board's ability to review cases and provide independently verified outcome indicators as politically threatening and react against the Board accordingly.

Program Adjustment Narrative

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3. Throughout the Board's 21-year history, there have been several attempts by different HHS administrators to eliminate the Board and/or to remove the Board's ability to provide independently verified information on outcomes for children in foster care to policy makers and the public.
4. When N-FOCUS was implemented in 1997 without the ability to provide the reports to the Board required in statute, the Board tried in good faith to work with that administration, but regardless of these efforts, it did not take corrective actions. It took a change of Governor before preliminary efforts were started to provide the reports, and considerably more time before the reports were actually programmed and issued on a daily basis.

C. Impact of request

a. Quantitative and qualitative impacts of the adjustment

Three additional staff assistants, system software and hardware will help the Board continue to track all children in out-of-home care per statute.

b. What services would be continued?

The Review Board would continue to work to meet our State and Federal mandates to track children and youth and utilize the system to schedule multi-disciplinary, community-based, timely reviews of children who have been in out-of-home care for 6 months or longer as mandated by federal law.

What client groups would be served?

Children in out-of-home care would be served by tracking all children in out-of-home care as mandated by state and federal law and regulations.

How will agency goals, objectives, outputs, and outcomes be affected?

The following Review Board goals and statutory obligations would be facilitated by this request:

- Maintaining a computerized tracking system on all children and youth in out-of-home care (Neb Rev Stat 1303)
- Collecting and verifying information on children and youth in out-of-home care (Neb Rev Stat 1303)
- Disseminating information on children in out-of-home care (Neb Rev Stat 1303)
- Releasing an annual report containing the data collected, an evaluation of such data and recommendations. (Neb Rev Stat 1303)

What will happen if funding is not provided for this request?

If funding is not provided for this request, the Review Board will not be able to track children in out-of-home care in a timely manner and as a result could be found to be out of compliance with its state and federal mandate to track review all children in out-of-home care. Federal sanctions could occur and Federal funding for these children's care could be lost. In addition, not all children in out-of-home care would receive the benefit and protection of citizen review as intended by the Legislature.

Program Adjustment Narrative

State of Nebraska – Administrative Services – Budget Division

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Indicate whether funding for this request matches other fund sources and to what extent other fund sources may be lost if the request is not funded.

The Review Board receives Federal funding based on the Board's general appropriation and the number of IV-E eligible children reviewed.

Federal funds the Board receives are figured by the following equation:

$1/2 \text{ of the FCRB Appropriation } (x) \% \text{ of IV-E children reviewed} = \text{Federal funding.}$

The Review Board could potentially see an increase in Federal funds as a result of additional General Appropriations.

D. Statutory change, if required

None needed

Program Adjustment Request

State of Nebraska - Administrative Services - Budget Division

PAGE NUMBER 21

CODE & DESCRIPTION

AGENCY 070 Foster Care Review Board

PROGRAM 116

REQUEST 5

EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	APPROPRIATIONS		ADJUSTMENTS	
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007
Permanent F.T.E. Positions	28.5	28.5		3.0
511100 Permanent Salaries - Wages	1,004,015	1,036,482		66,648
511200 Temporary Salaries - Wages	5,000	5,000		
511600 Per Diem Payments				
511900 Supplemental (One-time payments)				
All Other Salaries				
Sub-Total Salaries	1,009,015	1,041,482	0	66,648
515100 Retirement Plans Expense	74,000	76,500		4,991
515200 OASDI Expense	75,000	78,688		5,099
515400 Life and Accident Insurance Expense	468	640		50
515500 Health Insurance Expense	216,064	241,064		41,100
All Other Personal Services	17,000	17,000		
Sub-Total Benefits	382,532	413,892	0	51,240
510000 Personal Services	1,391,547	1,455,374	0	117,887
520000 Operating Expenses	253,227	256,796		
Postage				0
Software Lisensure (C				2,000
Communications				3,000
570000 Travel Expenses	39,950	48,332		0
580000 Capital Outlay	11,391	10,000		6,000
590000 Government Aid				
Total Expense	1,696,115	1,770,502	0	128,887
Means of Financing				
General Fund	1,158,154.00	1,209,253.00		88,610
Cash Fund	6,000.00	6,000.00		0
Federal Fund	531,961.00	555,249.00		40,277
Revolving Fund				
Total Funding	1,696,115	1,770,502	0	128,887

Note: In the blank lines under Operating Expenses, itemize individual line items that comprise a significant portion of the Total Operating Expenses.